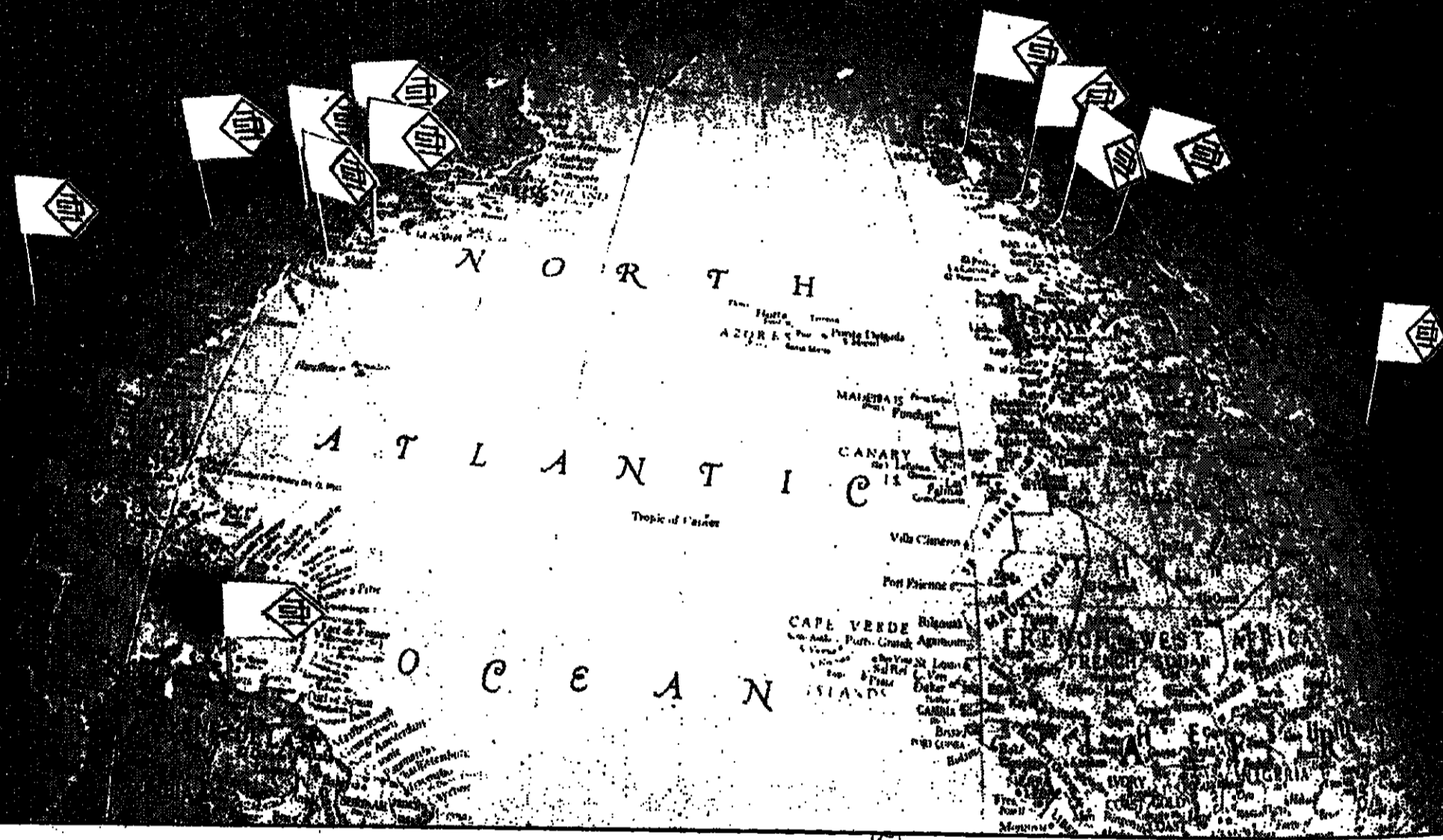


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THE JERUSALEM
POST
Supplement

Wednesday, October 24, 1979

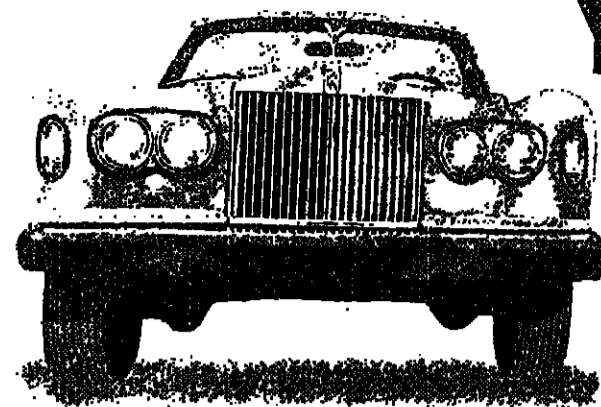
The new cars



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Cover: Bird's-eye-view of the recently completed Ganot interchange between Geha Road and the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem Highway. (24 Plus)



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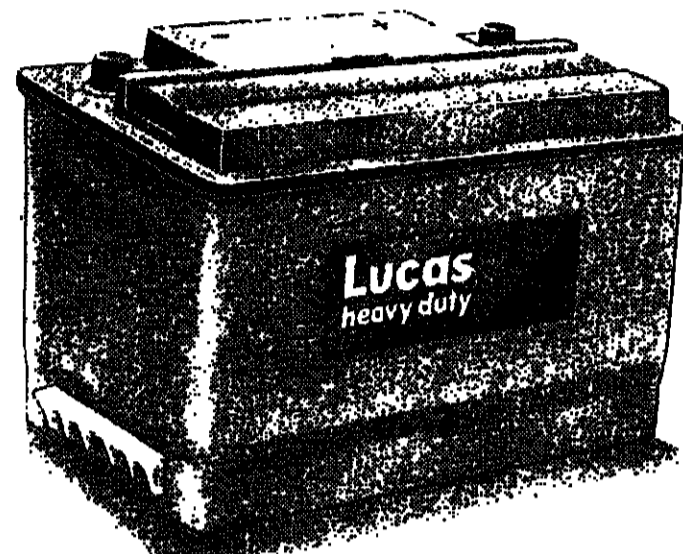
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In Jerusalem

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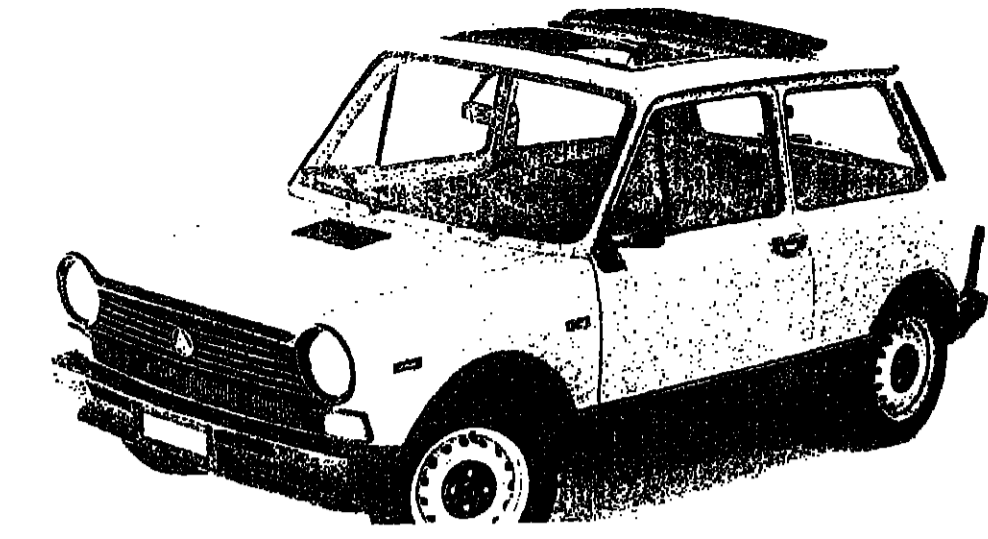
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Buick Skylark Sport Coupe (top left); Autobianchi A112 Junior (top, right); Talbot Matra Rancho (bottom, left); Volkswagen Polo and Derby (bottom, right).

ONE WAY of evaluating a country's economy is by taking a critical look at the kind of cars populating its highways. By such a standard Israel should rank somewhere at the bottom of the European ladder and perhaps also below a surprising number of Central and South American countries and even some African nations. It should be puttering along somewhere beside Turkey and, possibly, the poorer parts of Greece and Italy. Which should not surprise anybody — considering the cost of a popular-priced car here.

That cost is anywhere between IL375,000 and IL450,000 — more than ten times what I paid for my Sunbeam GL with its Borg-Warner four-speed automatic a mere five years ago. I, for one, intend to join up with the old-timers and keep my car until it falls apart. But for those that do have half a million pounds or so to spare (at the time of writing this — October 7, 1979, at 4.30 p.m.), here's a glimpse at the market and its going prices.

AUDI'S (original) concept of a successor to the Beetle seems still to be gaining ground. All major European car manufacturers are now bidding for this lucrative market, ranging in the 1,100—1,600cc engine category, with front-drive and hatchback.

The latest to join the team is Fiat's Ritmo, a smart and perhaps cautious trend-breaker. It adds lopsided design details on the hood and elsewhere, which were hitherto the trademark of superchargers and the like). The Ritmo has a big air-intake louvre on the passenger side and a "squint-eye" on its grille, with the air-intake grille being distinctly narrower on the same, left-hand front. There is plenty of plastic, back and front; conventional single headlights (round) and a novel wheel plate. The side mirror is a bit too ornate for my taste and the round door handles are downright

Car and country

Cars tell a lot about a country's economy, writes ZE'EV SCHUL as he surveys the new imports. In his ramblings he came across such things as homokinetic gears and Rzeppa couplings.

tasteless (by my lights). Door handles should be door handles. Recessed — by all means — and scratch protected, but not geometric riddles. A cursory glance at the car's interior dimensions and seats suggests that it is as comfortable as any in its class. Along with others in this category it is a bit short in seat-depth, that is, leg support. This can become tiring on longer journeys.

Dashboard design is functional, although I personally dislike light clusters. One tends not to see the forest on account of the maze of Christmas tree lights. I am conservative and prefer to check the engine's temperature before it reaches boiling point. Ditto oil pressure, battery charging and all the rest.

The steering wheel spokes do provide an unimpeded view of the instruments. Engine choices range from 1.1 litre to a top of 1.5 litre. All models have front wheel drive, McPherson strut suspension, rack and pinion steering, and a choice of an unspecified (I presume three forward speed) automatic gear for the 1.5 litre job. Also available is a version with five forward gears. Head restraints are optional, which I consider a scandal. They should by now be standard anti-whiplash equipment, compulsory in all new designs. There is also a choice of sunroof, tinted windows and sun blinds. The digital clock

also comes optional. THE RITMO'S aerodynamic styling and its lavish use of insulating materials reduce noise significantly. Prices start at IL363,944 for the Ritmo L 1,055 job and to a top of IL428,160 for the CL 1.5 litre (which would be my choice). I don't care for top speeds so much as for reserve power to accelerate the vehicle when needed, including on steep grades with a full load on board. If you think of air-conditioning, get the original factory-installed version. Coming out soon, but not necessarily scheduled for sale in Israel is a cabriolet version by Bertone which was first displayed at the Frankfurt Automobile Show last month. It will probably carry a fancy price tag. The prototype suggested around DM 15,000, at IL16.8 to the DM before taxes, and you name it.

TWO MORE FIATS worth an honourable mention include what should by rights be considered the parent of the Post-Beetle (Fiat version) family tree. The Fiat 127 made its debut as early as 1971. The latest version is a hybrid, half-way between the 900cc & la Polo (of Volkswagen) and the classic 1.1-litre engine best represented by Fiat in its famed Millesimo series of the 1950s.

Then there's the Fiorino, which has two and a half square metres

of loading space for goods and is also an innovation. Price — IL319,256 (for the Fiorino) as the dollar flies (true for the end of September 1979).

WHILE ON THE SUBJECT of the Italians, I have in front of me an advertisement cut out from one of the Hebrew papers — about a month old — with an Alfa Romeo in it. I suppose the prices no longer apply, but in mid-August an Alfa cost as "little" as IL335,600, all taxes included, for the super version, with the 1.3 litre engine. The 1.6-litre job was quoted at IL397,400. The reference was to 1979 models.

If you are in a buying mood and can still get hold of them, regardless of the rate of exchange now prevailing, you'll be getting yourself a real bargain. No need to harp on the sterling qualities of these cars. They have a good reputation, even if they are (now) a bit on the conservative side as far as styling is concerned. Those who really can't afford much (relatively speaking) but still insist on buying new, will be natural customers for the Subaru range of cars. The bigger models feature an excellent range of standard equipment usually available only as extras on European cars. They are also very pleasing to the eye. Alas — the good fortune of the Japanese yen has all but taken the edge off the distinctive price advantage this firm enjoyed at one time, and which contributed so

much to its popularity. Other winning features include a very economic fuel consumption and low maintenance costs. Believe it or not, the Subaru 600, which can go over 20 kilometres to the litre, sold for as little as IL154,000 at the end of July.

THE VOLKSWAGEN STORY. Those who think the days of the Beetle are over and done with had better do some more thinking. The car is here again, and as far as anyone can predict, more are coming at IL320,056 a piece, last month's price. They are still produced in Mexico and other Latin American countries, and now they are being reimported into Europe as well as the U.S. — and even into Germany itself. The Volkswagen range winds through the Polo (900cc), IL339,018; Derby (a two-door conventional design with boot and a 1,100cc engine) and the Golf. The Golf starts at IL388,450 for the 1,100cc engine and goes up to IL465,096, for the automatic 1,500cc five-door top of the range.

The Audi 100, just in case you are curious, costs close to three quarters of a million pounds. I hate to think of what its insurance adds up to. New off the Volkswagen production lines: a 1.3 litre Golf and a thing to be known as the Jetta, which will be to the Passat what the Derby was to the Golf and Polo. It will have a watercooled engine up front like all the rest, and will come in two versions — a 1,300cc and a 1,600cc. No price is mentioned, and Israel will for a start get only the 1,300cc job.

In case you were wondering what the conventional boot is now called (and those automobile salesmen will do anything to spruce up terminology), it's the notchback, as distinguished from the (now) conventional hatchback. Definitely new — no price — the Audi 200 is intended to compete with such luxury limousines as the

(continued on page 3)

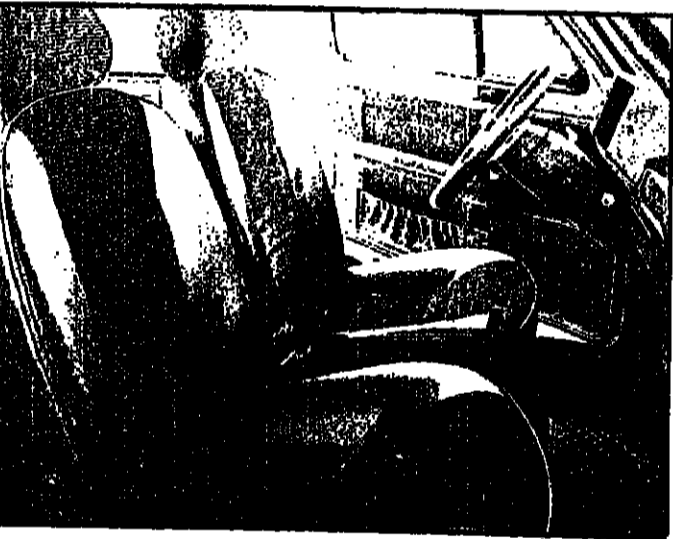
During the past year, petrol prices have been doubled — more than once. Instead of having to pay IL7 for a litre, you're now being asked to pay almost IL17 — an increase of 140%.

With petrol prices soaring, and the need for maximum exploitation of the petrol in your tank, you can look forward to an increase in the world sales of small cars. So Lancia-Autobianchi engineers and car designers thought out, designed and planned a selection of especially economical models for 1980. The Autobianchi A-112 is being accorded extraordinary popular acclaim on the Israeli market. The car's success lies in its giving you the maximum from the petrol in your tank, unusual driving reliability, maximum stability and originality of design.

The success achieved by the Autobianchi A-112 is attributable to the increased demand for smaller vehicles, by people seeking a reasonable price, low maintenance costs, highest reliability, top notch performance and manoeuvrability, and elegant finish and design. All this they find in the economical Autobianchi A-112 Junior, still known by its former title — Normal. This is a car with great power — relative to its size — and giving you 18 km. per litre of petrol. The Junior has a 903 cc. engine volume, and with as much as 42hp. braking power. The car has front wheel drive, with a top spurting power of 135 km. per hour, at 5400 engine rpm. The car's interior is equipped with a dashboard and control system, comfortable seats and sporty, easy-to-handle wheel — all of which, in the final analysis, provide you with enjoyable, tireless driving.

The A-112 Elegant has a 965cc. engine volume, and 48hp. braking power. Not to mention the elegant exterior design, which makes driving it an enjoyable experience. A new member of the Autobianchi family is the A-112 Abarth — the daring model. This is a car designed to give you the maximum in power, capable of competing successfully with most bigger engined cars on the road.

The A-112 sporty build and just-right design enables it to give you top performance and astounding manoeuvrability in heavy traffic, extended bottlenecks and plain ordinary travelling.



Above: Junior — available also with convertible roof.
Right: Junior — Innovative interior design.
Below: Abarth — Model for the connoisseur.
Left: Abarth — Elegant interior design for the 1980's.

This year's Autobianchi innovations: a fifth gear and electronic ignition, giving you the utmost in saving on petrol expenses, and will "wring" every possible drop out of each litre. Because of this the car is quieter and travelling in it — is a joy.

The Autobianchi is being offered at reasonable prices giving you the most for your money. No wonder that during the past year alone, 4000 Autobianchis were sold in Israel.

Talcar, the importer of Autobianchi and Lancia models, is devoting special attention to devoted customer service, and this by a revolutionary method: by employing an IBM computer which can forecast the precise demand for spare parts, by its garage network service data reservoir, and more.

By feeding the computer with the company's car traffic data, it is possible to forecast, in good time, the demand for spare parts and car accessories at garages and service stations, and to supply these spare parts in time.

The new Lancia hit: the Delta Epsilon. Lancia engineers have come up with a new, spacious car, excelling in its aerodynamic engineering.

The Delta Epsilon, with its 1300-1600cc. engine, can develop a 75-85hp. braking power.

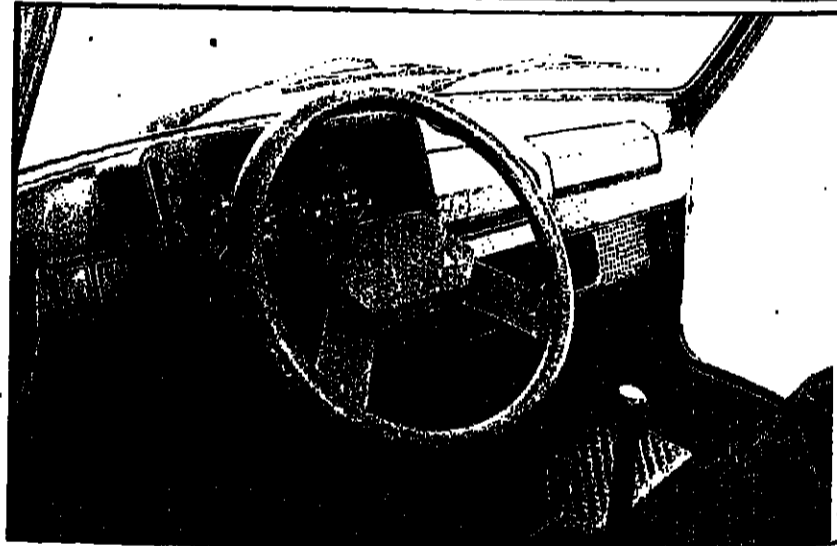
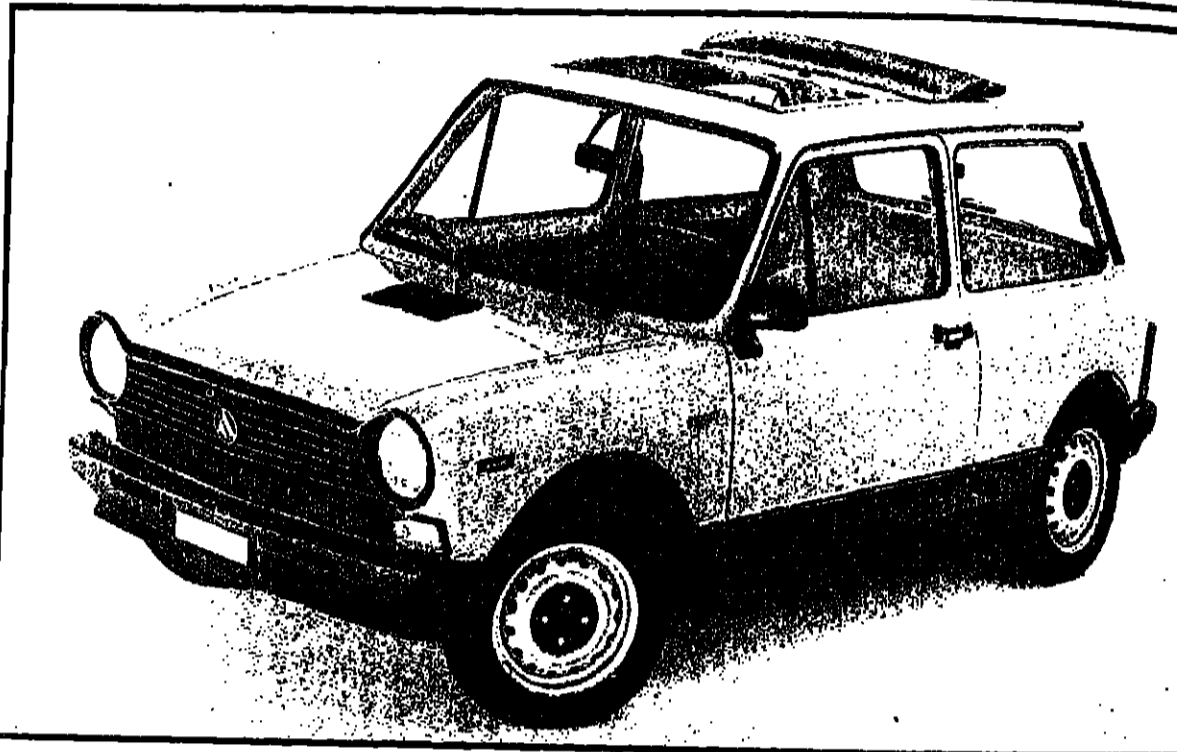
As in other Lancia cars, the Delta has electronic ignition, 5 gears, double braking system, a valve system for preventing brake closure, and disc dust and dirt protection.

The environmental factor has been taken into consideration in the car's American standard exhaust system.

Construction of the special chassis and the anti-rust aspect of the car were taken into special consideration by the manufacturer.

Autobianchi anticipates

petrol price rises



Car and country

(continued from page 3)

Mercedes 230-280 range, the BMW 520-528's, the Open Senator, the Citroen CX 2400 and the Ford Granada.

My mouth doesn't water. At least not for driving any of these cars in this country.

I DROVE a (hired) Mercedes 200 in Germany last year. It was an indulgent pleasure and I could manage 600km per day without feeling any noticeable strain. I also drove a Polo, which was fun. While I couldn't often do the 160kph I did on the Autobahn one Sunday morning (when the road was relatively empty), I managed very nicely at 120 km per hour. The Polo gave me no exaggerated feeling of speed, such as one is sometimes prone to get in a small car. Noise (engine and wind) was minimal. I've driven in a good many new 2-litre cars, that were infinitely worse.

I never got a chance to test the Polo on a real mountain. But the Harz Mountains (900 metres altitude) with their steep inclines which are as often as not covered with snow, did provide a good testing ground. In short: if my mind was up to buy a Volkswagen, the model of my choice would definitely be a Polo.

It takes an experienced driver to indulge in snappy driving with these small engines. Timely down-shifting of gears, gentle use of the clutch and accelerator, all combined with a feeling for the car and its limitations, will add up to enjoyable driving. Challenging — at least by my concepts.

LEO GOLDBERG, distributing the GM, Opel and Chevrolet lines here, is importing a snappier looking Kadett. Here is what he has to say about it and the 1980 Chevrolet-Buick range.

Our initial orders for the new 1980 Opel Kadett 'D' will be powered by 1.3 litre engines with front-wheel drive. They are two and four-door saloons, two-door Hatchbacks, and five-door station wagons.

The 1980 Ascona/Manta will be virtually a carry-over from 1979, except for new wrap-round bumpers. Two additional models being imported this year are the Ascona four-door saloon with 1.3 litre engine and manual gear only. Also four-door Ascona saloon with 1.6N engine with automatic transmission.

The 1980 Rekord is also a carry-over from 1979. An additional feature on some units is the option of "adjustable height" driver's seat, especially for handicapped drivers.

CHEVROLET, BUICK. There is a complete new front-wheel drive range from Chevrolet (Citation) and Buick (Skylark). Versions presently stocked include the Citation four-door standard of deluxe models with 2.5 litre four-cylinder engine.

The Skylark is offered in three models: four-door saloon, two-door coupe, and four-door "Limited" (Luxury) versions. Both 2.5 litre four cylinder and 2.8 litre six cylinder engines are available on the Buicks.

The above models include original A.M. radio, automatic gear, power-steering, power-brakes, tinted glass, and radial tires as standard. Many additional options such as electric

door lock and power-windows, power-seats, two-tone paints, vinyl roof, etc. are incorporated in various models to be held in stock.

The 1980 Chevette model is virtually a carry-over from the successful 1979 model, but includes some minor exterior changes. As previously, the Chevette will be available with or without original airconditioning, either with four-speed manual transmission or three-speed automatic transmission.

Standard features will include original A.M. radio, rear window heater, and deluxe exterior. Additional items for 1980 will be exterior sports mirror, tachometer and kilometre speedometer.

The Buick Century Sedan four-door saloon and the Buick Century Limited four-door 1980 models include a restyled body but its mechanics remain unchanged. Available fully equipped with either V-6 or V-8 engine.

A CAR that's really intriguing (as far as I am concerned) is the Citroen Visa. True — my information dates back to August 20, but even then the retail price, including all taxes, of IL278,852 was challenging. The company never took up my offer of a test drive. (I promised them nothing but the truth of my own, subjective impressions.)

I know a bit about cars but not enough to swoon at the mention of such things as a homokinetic transmission (whatever that may be, but it surely can't be as bad as it sounds) or tripod couplings on the gearbox side — *masal tov*. More power to them for that and something, believe it or not, called Rzeppa couplings on the wheel side.

What I can understand and raise my hat to is Citroen's celebrated flat twin air-cooled engine, with integrated electronic ignition. There's a double carburetor and the 602cc engine turns — or should I say churns out 86hp at 5,600 rpm.

There is also a Visa Super which has a four-in-line water-cooled 1,124cc engine, which leaves me as cold as a healthy dog's nose. Water-cooled four in-lines I have plenty.

THE MAXIMUM speed of the Visa special (air-cooled 652) is an official 124 kph. Which reminds me (no tall tale this), but most of my motoring adventures seem to happen on the German Autobahnen. The son and I were heading north, out of Frankfurt, driving a Golf. The son has a bit of a leaden foot on the gas pedal and was pushing the car at around 130 kph or thereabouts, which is no speed anyone gets excited about (there).

We passed a green Deux Chevaux. I remember the car — it was a vivid green — or frog green, as the Germans call this colour. (It used to be the hallmark of an Opel, sometime in the late 1920s, or was it the early 1930s?) The son remarked about the (yellow with envy) tinge of its occupants, suffering from the soft suspension of this car and, naturally, its limited speed.

"Bet it never gets over 100 kph in a headwind," the son said. We whoshed past just as Mercedes and BMWs and Porsches were whooshing past us. Had ourselves a bite at one of the rest stations and were back on the road when we spotted the self-

same car again.

"Maybe it's a different car painted the same colour," the boy suggested. But when we passed it again under similar circumstances and a third time, at noon that day, I definitely identified the occupants. I meekly followed in their wake, all the way to Hamburg. Either our speedometer was knocked up — or their engine souped-up.

Whatever — I've been looking at the cars with renewed interest ever since. The Visa is of course a reincarnation of the 2 CV. It fits somewhere in between the Dyane (CV) and the GS range. It's no longer an ugly duckling (not a ravishing beauty either, but with that planned robust look — no frills on the exterior).

Not having sat in one I am not at liberty to comment on knee space, headroom or all the rest. The dashboard (as in most Citroens I have seen) is a delight, featuring a control satellite with just about everything you may wish to do. The steering wheel is a single spoke, which should provide a good view of the twin dials (speedometer and clock — and why the heck clocks should be optional or available only in the luxury models at outrageous prices is beyond me).

Fuel consumption is claimed to be a very sensible 5.7 litres for 100 km at 90 kph. The speed is around 124 kph — which is as fast as anyone would want to go in Israel. Steering is rack and pinion and brakes include disks up front and dual circuit hydraulics.

Sounds nice. Pity I couldn't become better acquainted, especially with the electronic ignition bit, which is a third-generation type (with sensors and a minicomputer to adjust spark timing to actual engine requirements). That's what I said in the first place — an intriguing car. At least on paper!

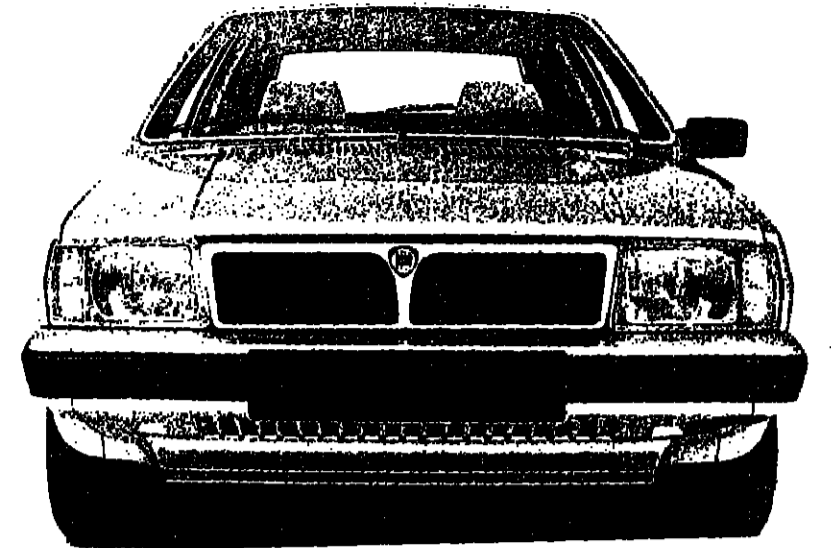
TO WIND UP this incomplete window shopping expedition I would like to point out that unless one buys a car "to last," that is, an expensive and conservation type that'll give a reasonable number of trouble-free years of service and will not be hopelessly outdated too soon — I'd suggest a close look at the trade-in values of the cars. These do not necessarily reflect their true value, but rather their "Israeli reputation," which can be linked to typical Israeli factors.

The Mirafiori 132 is an excellent example of this. Here's a good car going a-begging on the used car market. The reason (or principal one) is its rubber timing belt, which should be, according to factory specifications, replaced every 40,000 kilometres. That's more than two years' driving for the average Israeli.

Yet, reluctant to shell out the couple of hundred pounds this operation costs, many Mirafiori owners with faulty belts touched off mechanical chain reactions in their cars. They "blew" their engines and required expensive overhauls.

Get yourself a second-hand Mirafiori 132 car if you can. The 1974 model can be had for as little as IL150,000 to IL180,000. It is a bargain provided it is in good mechanical condition, its kilometre recorder hasn't been monkeyed with and it hasn't done more than 70,000 to 80,000 km.

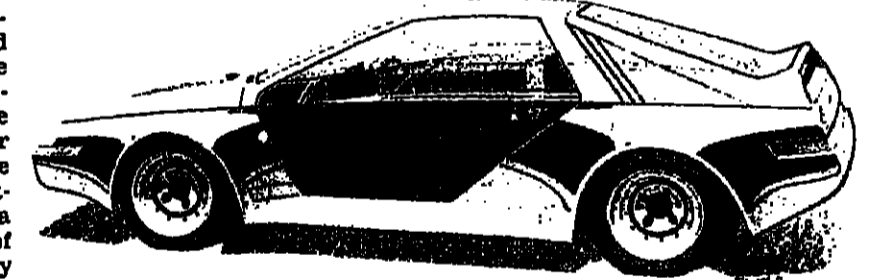
The Renault, and especially the 1.2 litre model, is an example of the opposite. It owes its high resale value more to Messars. Mercedes and BMWs and Carasso (the importers) than to its true qualities. The car has its aficionados. I do not belong to them.



Front view of the Lancia Delta.



VW Commercial with 88% enlarged window area.



This Ford Ghia Mustang experimental, aerodynamic two-seater was unveiled at the Frankfurt Motor Show last month.



Rugged, four-wheel drive Range Rover.



GM's sleek Chevrolet Citation for 1980.

WHAT IS the main factor in accidents here, the human element or the objective state of Israeli roads? The Israeli driver may be one of the world's worst, but he is often required to drive under objectively dangerous conditions.

Invariably, he also drives too fast, particularly in built-up areas (where the majority of accidents take place), but nothing is done to remind him of the speed limit. Periodic "educational campaigns" by the police, using normally desk-bound officers, have some immediate effect, but are usually forgotten the week they are over.

It is hard to escape the conclusion that Jerusalem police and municipal traffic officers have rarely undertaken a joint analysis of the state of the roads under their supervision. Even when certain objectively dangerous conditions are pointed out to them, action is not forthcoming.

LAST month, two normally desk-bound police officers were parked just west of the Motza bridge. One of them, a charming woman, was lecturing drivers emerging from Motza Hill where to stop before entering the line of juggernauts hurtling downhill.

The Motza drivers are so intimidated by the traffic that they never emerge onto the country's second most dangerous descent with anything less than great care — and none of them have had an accident at this point.

Dangerous Roads

The psychological effect of more frequent and clearly spelled out speed limit signs and better road markers would reduce accidents, writes MEIR RONNEN.

But the fact that all the vehicles descending this long and dangerous gradient were exceeding the speed limit was of no immediate interest to the police officer. "It's a problem we haven't been able to solve," she said.

Why not? From observation, I estimate that 80 per cent of private cars and 90 per cent of Jerusalem-bound buses and taxis descending to the Motza bridge do so at over 110 km/h, the idea being to get enough *shuang* to tackle the next hill without changing gear.

Many trucks follow suit — and many come to grief at the bridge.

I can't understand why there isn't a constant police presence or radar trap (once promised) on this hill. But most effective of all would be a large sign replacing the useless 20-year-old one that mildly reads "use low gear." The new sign, which ought to be five times as big, should read: "70 KM/H ZONE IL10,000 fine and loss of licence."

SPEED limit markers are virtually absent in Israel. The law puts

the onus on the driver to "know" the limit. In the U.S., speed limit markers appear on every street and highway — and at frequent intervals. There is a constant psychological reminder of the speed limit everywhere, in and outside the suburbs. Small residential sidestreets are zoned at either 24 or 40 km/h. Signs are also spelled out wherever possible.

"No stopping at any time" is written out; and there is no mistaking its message. The equivalent abstract sign in Israel is honoured only in the breach — partly because the Israeli driver knows he has an excellent chance of getting away with it; and partly because he is visually inured to the impersonal signs.

FURTHER east of Motza, on the last ascent to Jerusalem, there are a series of curves where several cars leave the road nightly, chiefly in the winter, tipping into the gutter or crashing into the hillside. Have the police and the Public Works Department never asked themselves why all the accidents happen on the inside as-

cent and not on the more objectively dangerous outside descent?

The reason is that there are no "cat's eye" reflectors on the inside of the highway, only on the side overlooking the wadi. Drivers unfamiliar with the road or sleepy after the drive up from Tel Aviv inevitably lose a front wheel into the dangerously deep gutter between the road and cliff. This gutter is necessary for drainage, but seems unnecessarily deep. It is also right at the very edge of the road. Why not reduce it to 20 cms.?

In an article in last year's motoring supplement, I pointed out that where this highway exits Jerusalem, the road was incorrectly and dangerously marked, forcing drivers to change lanes. It was later reported how it took me nearly 18 months of lobbying and mayoral intervention to get the Jerusalem Traffic Department to change the markings at their first try, they mistakenly renewed the bad ones. The Department did adopt my suggestion that the road dividers opposite the petrol stations be closed

up, but nothing effective has been done to get rid of the old road markings, which are now about the same strength as the new ones.

Five months ago, I wrote to the Jerusalem Department suggesting a method of burning off the old paint. I received an acknowledgement and was promised a reply, and there the matter ended.

Nothing has been done either about a number of other proposals I put to various Jerusalem traffic officials, both in writing and over the telephone:—

1) To put up written signs at the exit of Jerusalem forbidding stopping for hitchhikers or soliciting rides on the main highway, except at a designated spot in a traffic bay 200 metres to the West. A policewoman is needed full time at this spot to hand out fines to hitchhikers as well as drivers.

2) To connect the highway markings at all crossings between Giza Road and Malkha, so that drivers do not inadvertently change lanes on this fast strip; and to designate lanes where the road narrows by 50 per cent before the entrance to Gonen.

3) To create adequate safe parking at Sacher Park, where, at weekends and during park festivities, drivers park on Sderot Ben Zvi's main traffic lane (without ever getting a ticket). Police control-gates, on occasion set out on the highway at this point, without lights or warning signs, are often an additional hazard.

4) To erect and enforce double no-stopping signs on the double carriageway passing Binyenel Ha'ooma.

5) To put a centre divider all along Rehov Jabotinsky, a busy artery that varies its width every 50 metres.

6) To adjust the traffic lights at the entrance to the city whenever there is an increased inflow of traffic during the High Holydays. This simple procedure would prevent long lines of cars from forming and coming to a halt, as they overheat while stopping on the gradient. Lines of cars also form every morning at the Sderot Herd lights leading to the Hebrew University.

What has the Jerusalem Traffic Department been up to in the meantime? Well, all they seem to have done lately is to have divided up Rehov Bezalel into a three lane "no stopping" zone, one lane leaving Rehov Ben Yehuda and two lanes entering it, although the markings aren't connected that far.

The scheme doesn't work because the lanes are too narrow and because drivers still park on the single exit lane, particularly in the late afternoon, forcing others into one of the new incoming lanes, creating an even more dangerous situation than before. What's needed here is stiff enforcement or just a single divider down the middle of the road, all the way up to Rehov Ben Yehuda.

The new markings are even inadequate in execution — after only two months, they are virtually worn away, like most road markings in the capital (in confirmation of Ronnen's Second Law, which holds that only wanted road markings disappear).

Is it too much to ask the seemingly moribund Joint Jerusalem Traffic Committee (police, municipal officials, Ministry of Transport officials) to create safer conditions for Jerusalem drivers? And provide suitable threatening messages to careless drivers.

Swinging with Ritmo

'Enjoyable but expensive' is what ZE'EV SCHUL terms Fiat's Ritmo after a test drive.



The Ritmo C75 (1.5 litre) being put through its paces in Bab-el-Wad on the ascent to Jerusalem. (Ze'ev Schul)

VISIBILITY is excellent all round, with the rear windshield wiper particularly welcome. The side view mirror is a fancy job, looking (from the outside) like a close kin to the Mercedes interior-adjustable model. But only at first glance. It narrows at its outside end, which may be elegant but the exact opposite of what I'd like. A good view of the left-hand side of the road is more important than a top to bottom view of the car itself.

The rear view is unobstructed. A right-hand outside mirror would, at least in this top of the line category, have been justified and should certainly have been optional.

Seats and ventilation. The seats are comfortable but covered with a non-porous material, heating up in our climate. Seat covers are a must. Leg and back support are adequate. No whiplash headrests (available as optionals). Three-point safety belts — automatic self-adjusting ones would have been justified.

Ventilation while driving is excellent. Stationary, with the fan going at top speed, it is a bit on the loud side.

Instruments and instrument panel are functional. Two-dial speedometer and rev counter plus fuel gauge. Warning lights cluster (oil pressure, temperature, battery charge, etc.)

Steering — of the rack and pinion type — oversteers in coming out of sharp turns. Otherwise it is sensitive but agreeable. Steering wheel — the spokes are a narrow-angled downpointing V, too close to position on the wheel recommended by the experts. The rim is all that's left, but it is nice and agreeable — cool even after being exposed to the blazing morning sun rays.

DRIVING the car. Pedals — well spaced and shaped — just the right resiliency. Brake pedal perhaps a bit hard and less effective than one might expect from an almost new car — with booster and all (discs up front, pads in the rear. Dual circuitry).

Acceleration, provided you can adjust to the five-speed gear, is very sippy. I didn't time it but was up at 100 km/h with the rev needle just touching the 3,000 rpm mark and doing fine. By my lights that is an engine-saving ratio. Fuel

saver too. It took me some ground, with the rear windshield wiper fifth, the "overdrive," and I felt no marked difference other than a drop in revs and, of course, some loss of power.

The fifth gear is definitely for long stretches of open road, with gentle hills and maybe a nicely contoured curve, but no more than that. Negotiating the narrow Bab-el-Wad — Har Tuv stretch, for instance, if you really want to drive, you have to switch back to fourth and third. These are conveniently located facing each other, whereas the fifth is way to the right and up. Perish the thought, but reverse is located opposite the fifth and one can't help wondering what a quick down-change, hitting the reverse instead of third or fourth, would do to the car. Or rather, what would be left of the car if that's what we did.

THE ENGINE is surprisingly quiet, and the insulation shows off. But even for the fresh air feeds the good aerodynamic styling (evidently) reduces wind drag noises to a minimum.

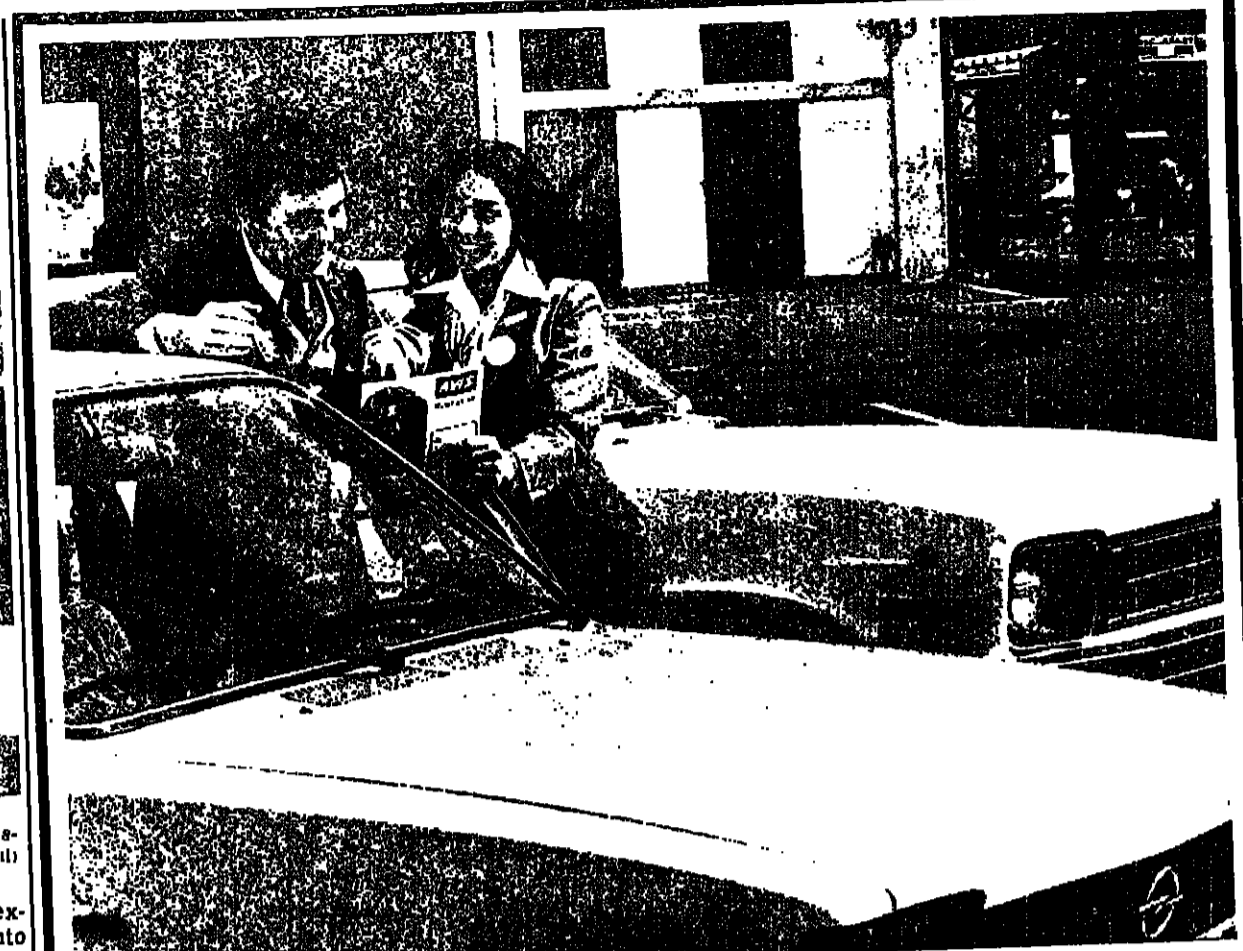
If I'd have my pick I would prefer a four-gear version or an automatic. The fifth over drive has no justification in this country unless one is going to use the car on more long-distance open road stretches than most of us do.

I am also not certain that the use of the fifth gear is an average driver sort of thing. With the fifth, the fourth becomes a fuel-guzzler, yet it is still essential for overtaking, mild gradients or regular short distance travelling.

All told the Ritmo is an enjoyable car. It should by rights be a popular-priced car as well; one that can be traded in every four or five years or so. It is probably planned to give a good, relatively trouble free performance for that long a period.

It is, however, not competitively priced. It costs over IL20,000, which may not be so very much in foreign currency, but is still at least three times what the car costs in Europe.

Israelis have a feeling that they've spent a fortune if they buy the car. And so they have. They also have great expectations for that kind of money. Whether the Ritmo will live up to such expectations remains to be seen. It is, after all, an *oleh hadash*. For style impressions see the general car roundup story.



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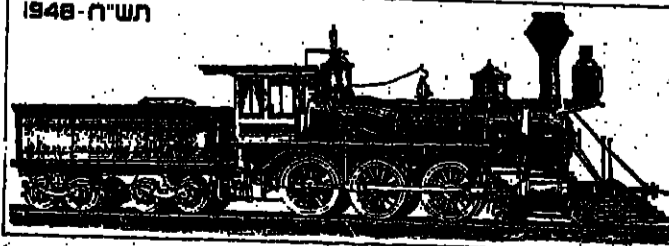


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DRIVERS, if you happen to see an average-looking man aged 30 to 40 standing at a busy city intersection with a note book in his hand — take care. He is not an ordinary pedestrian, he's likely to be a voluntary traffic observer in action.

Traffic observers are experienced drivers who volunteer their services in the war against accidents. Is their effort a failure? Many of them think so. Avraham, a veteran observer, is tired. No one seems to be able to cope with the unending flow of breaches of the traffic law, he thinks.

Emmanuel Kabiri, also a veteran traffic observer and head of the Jerusalem branch of the National Council for the Prevention of Accidents, has a different opinion. A professional in the field, he is enthusiastic about his organization and the role it plays.

Traffic observer

While some volunteer observers are discouraged, others remain enthusiastic about their work, writes ALEXANDER ZVIELLI.

We meet for the day's "action" in his office, a one-room flat on Jaffa road, in downtown Jerusalem. Some 20 volunteers arrive to join the police in patrolling busy intersections. Most of the observers come after a tiring day's work — it is certainly not easy to spend another two hours in the dust and heat of a busy intersection.

"Watch out for three main offences by drivers," Emmanuel instructs us. "Crossing against a red light, stopping beyond the broad white line that marks the

entrance to an intersection, and jumping the queue of waiting cars. And pay special attention to unruly pedestrians," he instructs a burly policeman, who seems to feel at home in his office.

"Write out your reports," he repeats, handing us the printed pads. "Note down the licence numbers, make of car, location, time of day and date. If it is a bus, write down its line as well."

"And what happens to our reports," asks Micha, an economist, "who cares about them?"

"You are wrong," Emmanuel corrects him. The police will process your summonses as if they were issued by their own men. In some cases traffic observers will be asked to appear in court. Those who refuse to go to court as witnesses because of the loss of working time should let me know. In such cases the Council will merely send the offenders a warning letter.

He explains that since witness fees are only IL60 a day, he simply cannot ask a traffic observer to spend a whole day there. Salaried workers, he agrees, are more willing to donate their time and testify, but the self-employed refuse, and he understands their position.

WE STEP OUT into the street. Each one is assigned a post. It takes me only a few minutes to realize that I must go easy on offenders, otherwise my stock of report forms will run out quickly. Out of ten drivers, seven stopped beyond the white line, impatient to get ahead the moment the light changes. Three cross the lights on amber, almost getting into the red. Still, I find it difficult to write a report. Am I really qualified to be a judge or a complainant?

I received my first driving licence at the age of 18, some 40 years ago, together with my high school graduation certificate. I was taught driving on an old Ford while still at school. I still think the late teens are the best time to introduce a person to driving. It was an expensive luxury in pre-war Poland, but a valuable experience.

But I had been riding a bicycle since the age of 13. In Warsaw a youngster had to pass an oral and a practical test to receive a bicycle licence.

I still think that such a bicycle test given at a specially equipped plot in the presence of a policeman was an important stage in my development. It was perhaps the first time I faced officialdom and was recognized as fit to perform certain actions which could affect the lives of others. I regret that we have no such law here. As a result bicycles contribute their share to the general bedlam on our roads.

I also believe that there is no place like school to teach youngsters good road manners. I would recommend that all pupils of bar mitzva age pass an examination on this subject. They should get marks for their knowledge of road rules and good road manners together with their other civics studies.

A SIMILAR TEST should be given to all army recruits, even if they have no intention of becoming drivers. Traffic courses should become regular subjects at teachers seminars and other institutions of higher learning. Education will provide the only real way to curbing traffic accidents.

I find ample confirmation of this thesis while watching the traffic

along King George Street, and exchanging opinions with other observers. Each of them makes his own contribution to this relentless struggle.

"I would urge periods of compulsory service by offending drivers at Magen David Adom first-aid stations and in the emergency wards of hospitals," urges Benyamin. What is a fine to a businessman? he asks even if it comes to a few thousand pounds.

"There is no equality before the law here," says Yehoshua, an education ministry official. "I have just seen a big car blocking traffic and forcing other cars to make a dangerous detour. I wanted to write a summons, but it was a minister's car. Knesset members' cars and those of all kinds of high officials have special privileges. This is not only unfair, but outright dangerous," he comments.

The light at the pedestrian crosswalk is red. But a mother with two small children is still trying to cross the road. Another group of youngsters repeats the performance and seems to take pleasure in challenging the passing vehicles.

Yehoshua believes that once you start making exceptions, be it for Knesset members or for pregnant women, there will be no end. He is the observer who writes the most tickets. Avraham, an old professional driver, who watches the Ben-Yehuda-King George intersection, is more lenient. "I'm here to help, not to punish," he argues. "I have just prevented an accident. It gives me pleasure to be able to help."

VERY FEW of the observers carry identification bands. "People don't like to be corrected or supervised," explains Halm, from Kol Yisrael. "Every Israeli driver believes he is the best and has nothing more to learn," he smiles.

"If we had a real customs reduction on automobile spare parts...if garages were more tightly controlled...if the insurance companies spent more money on accident prevention measures instead of advertising...if, if..." Moshe complains about everything. He just had an argument with a driver who stopped his car in the middle of the pedestrian crossing. "I retreated," he explains. "There were three aggressive youngsters in the car and I didn't like the looks of them."

We were all getting tired. The heat and petrol fumes take their toll. Some observers have already gone home. We admire the young traffic policewoman who spends the whole afternoon out in the street.

We drive home, trying to be as careful as possible. Out of 200 members invited to join us for the afternoon, only 20 turned up, and 600 reports were made out, Kabiri tells me the next day. One driver was recommended for good road manners.

Only increased public awareness and education will save lives, Kabiri insists. Anyone of good character, who has been driving for five years without an accident, who has passed a preventive driving course and is a member of the National Council for the Prevention of Accidents, can become a traffic observer. □



The wheel that turns the wheels

The steering wheel is the most immediate and constant contact between a driver and his car. Manufacturers look on it as their business card and put much thought into its design.

CONSERVATION OF ENERGY IS AN IMMEDIATE NECESSITY



A journey by bus is 10 times as economical on fuel consumption as the same journey by car. A bus journey is 15 times as safe. It uses 12 times less foreign currency and 25 times in infrastructure requirements (from Government publications). The national interest in conservation in general and energy in particular, demands extensive use of public transportation. Special road lanes for public transportation, the allocation of funds for service improvements, the allocation of land for garages and parking will ensure that the travelling public enjoys efficient, comfortable and economical use of buses.

GOVERNMENT, LOCAL AUTHORITIES — PRIORITY TO PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION IS IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST

Thank you **EGGED**

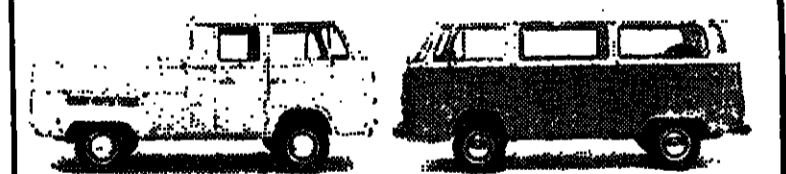


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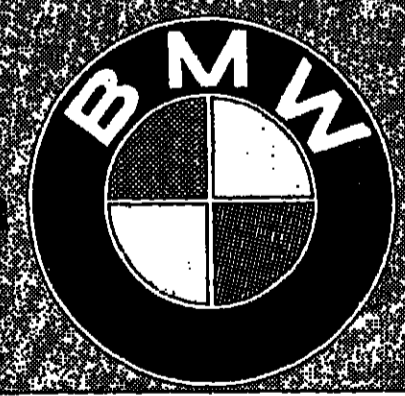
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NEARLY ALL travellers on buses in Israel, tourists included, are full of complaints about our mass transportation system. But after touring the U.S. for 20 days on Greyhound buses, all I can say is: "Thank Heaven for Egged and Dan."

First of all, prices. A short trip there, between two towns a few kilometres apart, something like Nes Ziona and Rehovot here, costs over one dollar — the equivalent of 20 cents here.

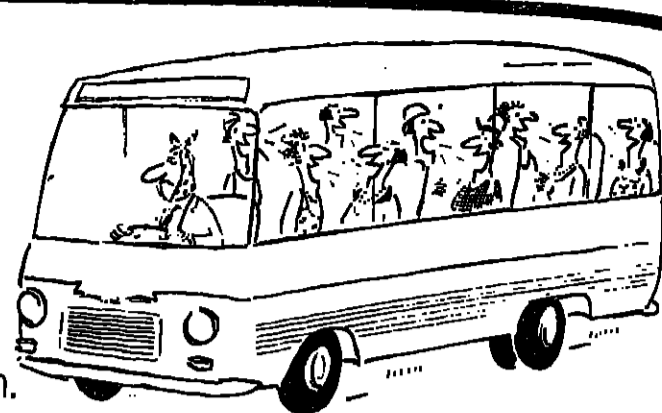
In the U.S. urban bus rides cost on the average between 20 and 80 cents; here they are about a dime.

But maybe the biggest difference concerns a factor we take for granted in Israel. That is bus frequency. Between Nes Ziona and Rehovot you have buses several times an hour. Between similar towns in America you are lucky to have a bus three or four times a day.

We as Israeli "greenhorns" got stranded in Disneyworld because of our Egged orientation. According to all brochures Disneyworld

BUS BLUES

After touring the U.S. by bus for 20 days YITZHAK OKED is full of praise for Egged and Dan.



is located in Orlando, Florida. But it is actually located a good half hour's bus ride from Orlando.

When we finished our wonderful day at Disneyworld about 10:30 p.m., we were astonished to hear that the next bus to Orlando would leave only at 1:30 a.m., when Disneyworld closed down. We couldn't understand this. Thinking that we had just missed a bus, we were shocked to hear that the most recent bus to go to Orlando had left at 7:30 p.m.. Six hours

between buses.

A bus driver explained to us that the main reason for these long intervals is that Americans preferred to travel in their own cars. Or to fly in to Orlando and rent a car there.

GREYHOUND and similar companies are not subsidised, therefore they cannot afford to lose money. They will not increase their frequencies until more passengers use their service.

Americans I talked to admitted that they had not travelled in an interurban bus in ages. Some even said they had never gone on such buses in their entire life.

Not only that, but travelling coast to coast we were never able to get hold of a time-table covering the entire country, so that we could plan our stops. Instead we received time-tables section by section, as we moved along.

Then, of course, there is the complaint in Israel heard from tourists and natives alike about the rudeness of bus station officials.

Well, I have news for you. Yes, it's true that clerks in the U.S. sport an artificial polite smile that is as sweet as saccharine. They also remind one of computerized robots. They are programmed. But if someone like an Israeli comes and asks them how to reach a place "off the beaten path, a place he normally isn't concerned with, he is suddenly lost. Then if you try needing him the way we do Egged officials here by saying: "It's your job to know. This is what you are getting paid for," then the artificial smile disappears, and he becomes as rude, if not ruder, than any clerk here.

SPEAKING of ticket and information counters. In all our travels, including small towns like Bozeman, we had to wait in line, to buy tickets. In big cities like New York and Washington it took about 15 minutes.

Another thing that may be new to you concerning bus schedules — buses no longer run on time. On big trips the bus can sometimes be over an hour late. Officials blame this partially on the new 55 miles (88 km) per hour speed limit, while their schedules are still set according to a higher speed limit.

I will end on a positive note. Bus drivers. The majority we met were real professionals.

Even if a bus was over an hour behind schedule, the driver never stopped on the gas, but drove the maximum legal speed.

The majority of drivers were courteous and they seldom lost their temper. They also command authority. If a passenger starts smoking in a non-smoking area, it's enough for the driver to say: "Will the person smoking in the non-smoking area please stop or move to a smoking area." The smoker then stops or moves to the rear, no arguments. Also no blaring radios.

THEN, OF COURSE, there is the ultimate in travelling comfort. Chairs that really move back; air-conditioners that really work up to a certain high temperature; after 35 degrees centigrade outside the bus airconditioners do not cool enough.

And last but not least, restrooms on very bus and at every station. Some of them, though, made me homesick. They were as filthy as those in Israel. That included those you had to pay about IL7 to enter. □

West of Singapore

TEL AVIV Deputy Mayor David Shiffman has a dream: traffic is flowing smoothly through the streets of the city, regulated by perfectly synchronized traffic lights. Cars not in use are tidily lined up in parking lots, and cyclists are riding calmly on special lanes built along the city's main streets...

Unfortunately, reality could hardly be more different. The sharp rises in the price of petrol, car accessories and taxes in recent years have had no effect on the number of motor vehicles clogging Tel Aviv's commercial centres.

With the increase of private cars — Tel Aviv now averages one car per four people, or one per family — the city's administration simply cannot deal with the heavy traffic, illegal parking and wild driving. At best, the city's business centre resembles a hopeless tangle of trucks unloading in the middle of the street, cars double-parked or parked on sidewalks and bicycles dangerously weaving in and out of the traffic, which is jammed more often than not.

Having no plans to introduce another means of public transportation in the next ten years or so, (subway, elevated trains) the Tel Aviv municipality found itself sorely in need of measures more drastic than mere traffic regulations — which most drivers ignore, anyway — to reduce the number of cars in the city centre.

Thus the Singapore Plan was born. Its midwife was the city's transport department headed by Deputy Mayor David Shiffman. It boasts that the plan, named after a similar one adopted in Singapore, will boost the development of Tel Aviv's commercial centres, provide for more efficient public transportation, help save fuel and pay for itself as it goes along.

In 1974 the government of Singapore announced its intention to limit the use of private cars in the city's main business centre during the morning rush hour. Drivers wishing to enter the restricted zone would have to buy a special sticker and permit. Company-owned cars would be charged twice as much for the sticker and permit. Buses, police and army cars, as well as private cars carrying four or more passengers, would be allowed to enter the restricted zone free of charge.

Some 10,000 parking places were prepared on the outskirts of the restricted zone. The cost of parking within the zone was raised by 50 per cent. A fleet of 90 shuttle buses began to operate between the parking lots outside the restricted zone and the business centres.

Michal Yudelman

"LIKE TEL AVIV, Singapore had tried everything else before it decided to restrict access into its business centre to private cars during the morning rush hour. It had tried widening road junctions, adding traffic lights, improved traffic management, bridges over junctions. But traffic was still too heavy. The commercial centre was clogging up instead of growing," Shiffman told *The Jerusalem Post* after his return from Singapore earlier this month.

Ever since he began toying with the Singapore Plan, in January 1978, Shiffman has come under fire from various sources, including engineers, public transport and municipal officials.

The most scathing criticism came from Arye Dudal, a local architect, who served as project manager for the original Singapore Plan. "I have no idea why this plan in Tel Aviv was named after the Singapore Plan. The original Singapore Plan was an overall development programme, of which limiting private traffic in the business cen-

tre was only a small part," Dudal told *The Post*.

Dudal is certain that the Singapore Plan will not work in Tel Aviv. "Among other basic differences, Singapore's business centre is small and concentrated, while Tel Aviv's is spread out. It should be remembered that the people of Singapore have an inner discipline which is completely lacking in Israelis," Dudal said.

He was surprised that Tel Aviv municipal officials had to go as far as Singapore to see how a restricted zone worked. "There are many examples in Europe — which has been operating similar plans since the 1950s — more adaptable to the Tel Avivian reality," he emphasized.

But Shiffman returned from Singapore more determined than ever to implement his version of the plan. He said that the structure of Tel Aviv, its business centres, the number of private vehicles and all other relevant factors here were perfect for the plan.

"Apart from the fact that the majority of Singapore residents are Chinese, and here they are Jews, the objective situation is 100 per cent suitable for Tel Aviv," Shiffman stated with finality.

SHIFFMAN'S plan also includes special bicycle lanes and strictly regulated loading and unloading for commercial vehicles.

The area designated as a restricted zone is roughly delineated by Rehov Salame in the south, Yehuda Halevi and Ibn Gabirol in the East, Frishman and Dizengoff in the North and Herbert Samuel in the West.

The only thing that at present stops Shiffman from implementing his long-desired plan is the approval of the municipal executive and council. If he can convince these bodies to support his plan, Shiffman may close Tel Aviv's streets to private cars during the morning rush hour by the middle of next year.

"Singapore has 41 commercial centres larger than anything Tel Aviv has, yet traffic there is orderly and access is convenient. The business centre of the city has developed greatly since the implementation of the plan, Shiffman said.

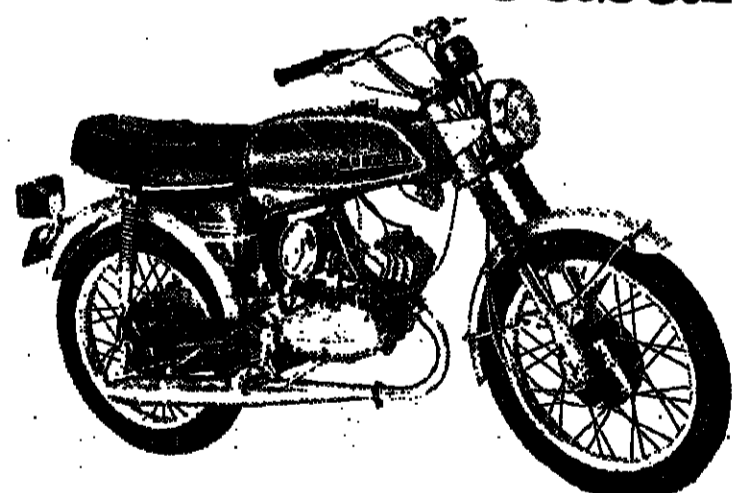
The main objection to the Singapore plan is expected to be voiced by the opposition in the municipality.

It is hard at this stage to guess what the public reaction to the controversial plan will be.

The general attitude is perhaps best expressed by one Tel Aviv driver who was asked about the Singapore Plan: "The Singapore Plan? Ha! They've been talking about it for years. They'll probably continue to talk about it for years to come." □

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